

# TOKEN TOPICS

of the

CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION of TOKEN COLLECTORS

JANUARY, 1987

Issue No. 125

Stephen P. Alpert  
Editor

**1987 DUES** Please send your 1987 CATC dues (\$3.00) to Elaine Willahan, 516 W. 99th St., Los Angeles, CA 90044 if you haven't done so already. Don't forget that a free ad is available to each member in each issue of Token Topics. Why not include one with your dues payment, or send it directly to Steve Alpert, Box 66331, Los Angeles, CA 90066 (for all ads during 1987). Any news items or short articles from members are also welcome.

**JANUARY MEETING** As has become custom, our first meeting of the new year will be held at the home of Robert Ritterband on Sunday, Jan. 18, 1987, from about 1:00 to 4:30 PM. His address is 6576 Colgate Ave., L.A., in the West Wilshire district, near Farmers Market (3 blocks west of Fairfax, 3 blocks south of 3rd St.). An announcement regarding our club's "30th Anniversary scavenger hunt contest" will be made (see below) so attend to get a headstart toward the cash prize. Also bring along material to swap, sell, or put in the club auction.

**NOVEMBER MEETING REPORT** Eleven members attended our November 1986 meeting at Elaine's home: Steve Alpert, John Barnes, Dick Bestard, Boyd Cashman, Fred McGinnis, Wally Shidler, Ken Smith, Paul Thompson, George Ticknor, Elaine Willahan, and new member Gary Watkins. An election was held for our 1987 club officers; elected were Stephen Alpert (President and Editor), Fred McGinnis (Vice President), Elaine Willahan (Secretary), and John Barnes (Treasurer). John Barnes conducted the club auction - a small one - ten lots (of books, wooden tokens, RTD paper tokens and publications, etc.) which generated \$2.85 to the club.

After the regular meeting, an Executive Board Meeting was held to discuss Steve Alpert's idea of an exonomia scavenger hunt contest to be administered by the Executive Board and open to all collectors in the United States and Canada, to celebrate the 30th Anniversary year of the California Association of Token Collectors. The Executive Board approved the contest, which has a potential cash prize of over \$350 to the winner. Our Executive Board consists of the above four 1987 officers, plus our immediate past-President (who is not already on the Board), Bob Ritterband.

The details of what has to be gathered to win the scavenger hunt prize has not yet been revealed. The winner will be determined and announced in September, 1987 (if nobody completes the task earlier). A complete list of contest rules and regulations will be included with the March 1987 issue of Token Topics. (Also look for news of this contest in numismatic publications and newspapers.) If you want to get a jump on the contest, attend the January 1987 CATC meeting to find out what the scavenger hunt is to consist of.

**GIFT COINS** Over the past couple of decades or so, some establishments have issued and sold gift certificates that are in the form of a token or medal. These pieces have high denominations, and I believe some were struck in silver. These have been and still are used by department stores, jewelry stores, and other high class places. I believe these pieces qualify as trade tokens. But probably very few are in the hands of token collectors because of their limited mintage and high face values.

Last month I spotted an ad in the Los Angeles Times that pictured two such gift coins, of Loehmann's women designer fashions (stores in L.A., Reseda, Fullerton, Huntington Beach, and Palm Springs). The ad is for "Loehmann's Gift Coins" as the perfect holiday gift. Two rectangular (with rounded corners) art-bar-ingot-like



coins are illustrated. Each has an L-in-shield logo at top, Loehmann's in script across the center, and the denomination at the bottom: Twenty-Five Dollars, and Fifty Dollars. The reverse isn't shown, nor is the metal or composition mentioned. The illustrations are 45 x 23mm.

I wonder what the businesses do with the redeemed coins. Deface them? Reuse them? Destroy them? Eventually devalue them? If any reader knows, write in.

**FREE MEMBER ADS:** (Send them to Steve Alpert this year.)

**BUYING HAWAIIAN** Tokens: Saloon, Dairy, Plantation, Luncg school tokens, Encased Pennies & Military tokens & medals, Hawaiian postcards, souvenir spoons, menus and match covers. Gary Lau, 4366 Kilauea Ave., Honolulu, HI 96816

**I HAVE BICYCLE** License tags (metal & paper), auto license plates from Arkansas, 1950s Bearden and Jonesboro. Will sell or trade for Tokens, CASH or I.D. tags that soldiers wore in the WARS any war. John G. Nicolosi, 2565 Portola Dr.#43, Santa Cruz, CA 95062

**NICE OLD HOBO NICKELS WANTED.** Paying \$15 to \$25 each. Please write or ship for my offer. Pass the word. Thanks. Steve Alpert, Box 66331, Los Angeles, CA 90066

**ONLY GENUINE** Bicentennial Bawdy House medal. Fran's Star Ranch. Beatty, Nevada. Anti-queued bronze. Dollar size. Only \$7.86 prepaid. Free! Fran's match folder and bumper sticker. Bill Williges, Box 445, Wheatland, CA 95692

**NEVADA AND ATLANTIC CITY GAMING AND CASION TOKENS** bought and sold. Complete 22 page list & encased cent \$2.00. Buying Nevada \$1.00 slot machine gaming tokens and chips, for years 1979 thru 1986 in Unc. condition. Deb's, Box 6445, Burbank, CA 91505

**I NEED UT, ID, MT, WY, NEV** tokens. What do you have for trade or purchase? D.L. Freed, Box 2009, Salt Lake City, UT 84110

**WANTED: TENNIS** award medals, YMCA towel checks, and Louisiana tokens. Thanks! Cindy Grellman, 6733 Post Oak Lane, Montgomery, AL 36117

**NEW** Lawrence (IN) Auto Wash token. I will trade for any Moose Lodge token, or TT that I can use in my collection. Jack R. Smith, P.O.Box 26423, Lawrence, IN 46226

With the last ad, above, Jack sent along one of the car wash tokens, and the following information:

"This car wash is located at 8100 Pendleton Pike in Lawrence, IN. It has nine bays for sofspra and three bays for a robo type wash. The robo uses this token at a cost of \$2.50 per wash with the fourth free (with coupon). Like the robo it gives a poor wash and I wouldn't use it if there was any other way to get tokens. They have a limited supply and collectors are not welcome. It's brass with WM plating."

The description of the token is as follows:

(illustration of car in wash bay, water spraying from above) / Lawrence / Auto Wash / VB (= Van Brook signature)

NB 28 Sd NON REFUNDABLE / (crown) / CARWASH / TOKEN / VB / NO CASH VALUE

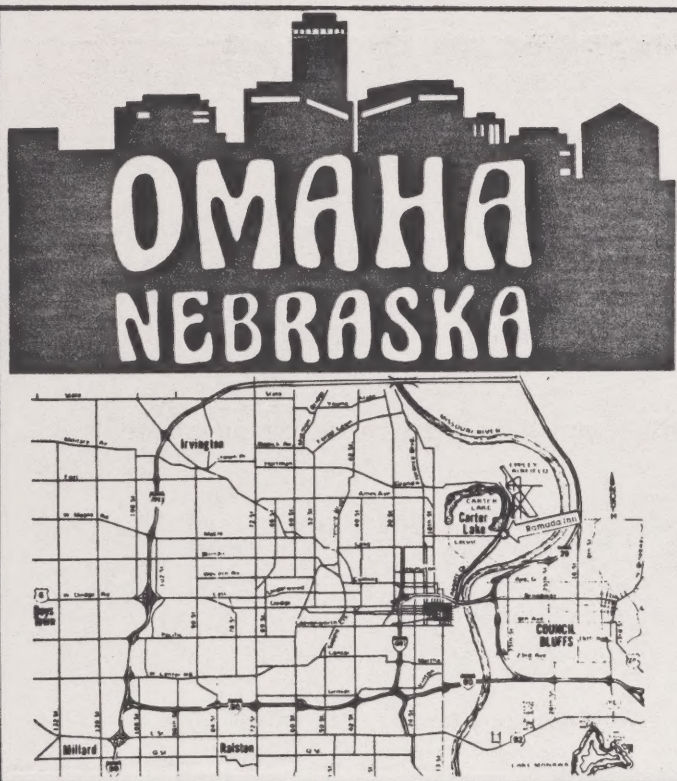
I'll bring the token to the January meeting; if you have something to trade Jack for it per the ad above, you can take this specimen in trade.



Paid Ad

# 5th ANNUAL ATCO

## National Token & Medal Show September 5&6, 1987



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Abbot Drive & Locust  
Omaha, NE 68110

(\$43 /1-4 per room)

**FREE  
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# TOKEN TOPICS

of the

CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION of TOKEN COLLECTORS

MARCH, 1987  
Issue No. 126

Stephen P. Alpert,  
Editor

LAST CALL FOR 1987 DUES ! Many of our members still haven't paid their \$3.00 dues for 1987. If you are one of them, a note is enclosed. This will be the last issue of Token Topics you will receive if you don't renew for 1987. Send your \$3.00 dues to Elaine Willahan, 516 W. 99th St., Los Angeles, CA 90044.

MARCH MEETING: Time: March 15, Sunday, 1:00 to 4:00 PM.  
Place: home of Elaine Willahan, 516 W.99th St., L.A., near Century and Figueroa, just west of Century exit of Harbor Freeway. Please bring as much material as you can to trade, sell, show, auction, or whatever. Our auction should be a good one this time; some good material is already on hand but more will be needed. Take advantage of the spirited bidding that better items attract at our meeting auctions.

JANUARY MEETING REPORT: Bob & Molly Ritterband hosted our January meeting which was attended by 14 enthusiastic participants: members Steve Alpert, John Barnes, Dick Bestard, Bob & Harriet Carter, Boyd Cashman, Fred Coops, Bob Kubach, Fred McGinnis, Bob Ritterband, George Ticknor, and Jack von Bloeker, plus guests Judy McGinnis and Molly Ritterband. John Barnes presided over the club auction, a small one of just 9 lots of miscellaneous exnumia and paper collectibles. Items were donated by Bob Ritterband and Jack von Bloeker. The auction brought \$4.45 to our treasury. Later, the Executive Board met to approve the rules of our 30th anniversary contest (a copy is enclosed with this issue of Token Topics). The rest of the meeting was devoted to trading activity, token talk, and of course the refreshments.

SCAVENGER HUNT CONTEST REPORT (as of Mar. 3) Our 30th anniversary scavenger hunt contest is off to a slow start. Press releases were sent out Jan. 22. So far notice of our contest has appeared (in chronologic order): 1) in the Los Angeles Times "Your Coins" weekly column; 2) in the IKO-TAMS Bulletin ( $\frac{1}{4}$  page writeup); 3) in ATCO (Active Token Collectors Organization), where our contest rules and information sheet was reproduced on 2 full pages); 4) in Coin World, Feb. 25 issue, page 162. Possible mention in 6 other publications is pending.

So far only one person has registered in the contest. A copy of the rules is enclosed here. If you want to register, just mail us a note saying so and include your home phone number.

GOLD DOLLAR SMITH by Steve Alpert Many of our local southern California CATC members have an interest in old amusement areas, parks, and rides. So anyone who can write a short article in this area for Token Topics, please do so and send it in for publication.

Recently the interesting old brass 32mm advertising token illustrated here was consigned to my May 1987 mail bid sale. It was issued by Gold Dollar Smith's Hotel in Coney Island, N.Y. A large bust of an Indian is on the obverse, along with the date 1854 (significance unknown). The reverse reads "Compliments of Gold Dollar Smith's Hotel, Restaurant And Bismarck Garden, Surf Avenue and West 16th Street, Coney Island. Opp' Steeplechase Park, Open All The Year (Greenduck signature)."

I have a few books on the history of Coney Island so I skimmed through them looking





for mention of Gold Dollar Smith. I found in one book a brief reference to him as Silver Dollar Smith, back in the 1880's. He was a Hungarian Jew who had a saloon on Essex Street in Manhattan. He was also an important local politician of the East Side. His saloon had a thousand silver dollars and a \$50 gold piece imbedded in its concrete floor. This attracted thousands of people (and customers) who came to observe and walk on the floor and "see how this fool wasted his money." This gimmick was very profitable for Smith, and in the 1880's he opened a summer saloon at Coney Island, also with a coin floor. In three days more money crossed the bar than was in the floor.

The above token was issued a decade or more later, as Steeplechase Park, mentioned on the reverse, opened in 1897. Smith probably had a coin floor in this hotel-restaurant-saloon establishment also, maybe using more gold coins, and changing his moniker from Silver Dollar Smith to Gold Dollar Smith. Or maybe Gold Dollar Smith was the son of Silver Dollar Smith and born in 1854, the date on the obverse?

(This token is to be auctioned in my next token & medal mail bid sale, available for \$1.00 if you are not currently on my mailing list.)

NEW MEMBERS: We have two new members to welcome: #212 is Jack von Bloeker, P.O. Box 1169, Green Valley, AZ 85622. And #213, Charles Annegan (see his ad this issue).

ODDS & ENDS OF INTEREST: A con man in China recently tried passing fake U.S. \$5 million and \$1 million bills, without success. These bogus fantasy bills would make great collector items. I'd love to see what they look like. <<<<O>>>>

"HOARD" versus "HORDE": If you find a large cache of tokens, have you stumbled upon a hoard or a horde of tokens? Both of these homonyms (words that sound alike) are used by token collectors. Which do you use? To be correct, use "hoard" for a large number of tokens (usually from the same merchant) that is uncovered after being hidden, lost, or stashed away for a long time. The word "horde" represents a large number of people often on the move (a crowd, wandering tribe, invading army, etc.). <<<<O>>>>

Reproduced below is a personal \$10 bill issued by W.C. Fields in his early days as a vaudeville juggler. Actual size of bill unknown. Have you ever seen one? Probably a very rare and desirable item. <<<<O>>>> The Los Angeles Times reports that over 220 companies have operated some form of public transportation in Los Angeles since the 1870's, with almost 100 of them operating horsecars and trolleys from the 1870's through 1910. Apparently very few of them issued tokens, unfortunately. Why didn't the L.A. Rubber Stamp Co. hound them into using tokens?

Wanted Calif. Car Wash Tokens: 038A,193A,294A,337A,413A&B, 660C,708A. I have the following to trade for above: IL675A,KS350A,MA280Ab,935A;MO980A,NY138A,182A,702A. Michael Super, 222 Overlook Rd., Ambler, PA 19002

SOFSPRA car wash tokens wanted; I have Sofspira and other scarce car wash to trade. John Nicolosi, 2565 Portola Dr. Sp.43, Santa Cruz, CA 95062

You can help Williges celebrate 24 years exclusive token/medal sales. Send 24¢ for surprise dollar size goldene medal & next 3 lists. Bill Williges, Box 445, Wheatland, CA 95692

WANTED-Civil War sutler tokens "yellow boys"(metal), or paper chits. Prefer named regiments. Also store cards. Have a few for sale. Charles Annegan, Box 1304, San Marcos, CA 92069

My book "The Best of Token Topics" reprints highlights from the first 100 issues of CATC's Token Topics, 1966 thru 1982. 90 pages, soft cover, autographed on request. I still have many copies available. Order one now at special reduced price of \$5.50 postpaid. Stephen Alpert, Box 66331, Los Angeles, CA 90066



**FREE ADMISSION**

**5th ANNUAL**

**ATCO**

**National Token & Medal Show**

**More Info:**  
George Hosek  
7411 Iddedale Ln  
Omaha, NE 68112  
(402) 455-1905

**September 5&6, 1987**  
**OMAHA, NEBRASKA**  
**SAT. 10-7 SUN. 9-5**

**Show Address:**  
RAMADA INN AIRPORT  
Abbott Drive & Locust  
Omaha, NE 68110  
( \$43 / 1-4 per room )  
(800) 228-9075



CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF TOKEN COLLECTOR'S  
30th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION SCAVENGER HUNT CONTEST  
OFFICIAL RULES AND REGULATIONS

1. **ELIGIBILITY:** The contest is open to all collectors in the United States and Canada, except the members of the Executive Board of the California Association of Token Collectors (who will supervise the contest and determine the winner) and their families. The contest will run through Sept. 1, 1987.
2. **REGISTRATION:** Anyone planning to enter the contest must register his/her name by sending a large self-addressed stamped envelope to receive a copy of the Official Rules. Registration must be made prior to Aug. 1, 1987, and you must include your home phone number for notification of winner. If you already have a copy of the Rules, you still must register by sending us your home phone number. You must report your progress on or before Sept. 1, 1987, to be eligible for the prize.
3. **THE CONTEST:** The challenge is to assemble a complete DATE SET ("month and day") for the entire calendar year, using dates found on any type of token, medal, or tag, from the United States or Canada only, subject to the restrictions and limitations given below. A different item must be found bearing each date: Jan.1, Jan.2, Jan.3, Jan.4, ..., all the way through Dec.31, and including Feb.29, the leap year day. Thus a complete set will consist of 366 different pieces, each bearing a different date of the year. The year is unimportant and need not be present, and the type or topic of the piece bearing each date is irrelevant. The collector value of the piece is also immaterial: junkbox specimens worth 5¢ or 10¢ are just as valid as rare pieces bearing the same date.

The first person able to complete the date set and have it verified by the judges (see below) will win \$366.00 (= \$1.00 for each date). If no one completes the set, all entrants must report the number of dates they have assembled, no later than Sept. 1, 1987. Whoever claims the highest number will be notified by phone, and after verification will win 75¢ for each date assembled. In case of a tie, the prize money will be divided equally among the winners.

4. **TYPE OF DATES ALLOWABLE:** Each date must have the name of the month spelled out completely or abbreviated by 3 or more letters, and be followed (immediately or unambiguously nearby) by the day number in numerals or spelled out. Examples follow, using November 20th.

Examples of dates that are allowable:

Nov. 20 or Nov. 20th or November 20 or November 20th

November Twentieth or Nov. Twentieth

20th of November or 20th of Nov.

Nov. 20-23 (when a run of consecutive dates appear, only the first may be used)

Nov. 20 to Nov. 23 (can be used for either date, but not both)

Nov. 20,21,22,23 (can be used for the first date only)

Examples of dates not allowed:

11-20 or 20-11

NV.20 or No.20 or N.20

20th Day of the Eleventh Month

All tabular dates, such as with the month at top

and list of days below (see example at right:)

Dates with Roman Numerals as part of the date (month or day)

All dates in foreign languages.

NOV.

19 ...

20 ...

21 ...

5. **RESTRICTIONS:** The following may not be used:

- a) exnumia from countries other than the United States and Canada.
- b) dates appearing as counterstamps.
- c) modern engravings.
- d) items made specifically for this contest.
- e) items dated 1987 (must be 1986 or earlier if dated).
- f) rectangular paper tickets or coupons.



- g) rubber-stamped, date-stamped, machine-stamped, postmarked, or handwritten dates on non-metal exnumia.
  - h) personal ID tags or tags from self-service letter punch machines.
  - i) dates that don't exist (Feb.30, April 31, etc.); or dates on coins or currency.
  - j) pinback buttons, pocket mirrors, and other such non-coinlike advertising or souvenir items.
  - k) items too large to fit into a 2x2 envelope. Larger pieces are not allowed, nor are larger items folded down to 2x2 inches or smaller.
6. **LIMITATIONS:** This is to prevent collectors with a large number of one type of exnumia to have a significant advantage. No more than six (6) pieces are allowed per month of each of the following types of exnumia:
- a) wooden nickels or wooden tokens
  - b) elongated coins
  - c) sport schedule tokens
  - d) love tokens or engraved award medals
  - e) Mardi Gras doubloons and medals
  - f) baseball coins
  - g) souvenir trade coins from town celebrations, etc.
  - h) personal tokens of token collectors
7. **CORRESPONDENCE:** Entrants may wish to check from time to time to find out if someone already won the contest. If someone does win before Sept. 1, we cannot notify all entrants of this fact, but such news will be sent to COIN WORLD and NUMISMATIC NEWS newspapers. Every time you write in for information, to have questions answered, or to check on the acceptability of certain pieces, be sure to include a stamped self-addressed return envelope for a reply. Use the address below for all contest correspondence.
8. **VERIFICATION OF WINNING COLLECTION:** The first collector who writes in claiming to have completed the date set, will be asked to send in his collection for verification. A written invoice with a brief description of the item for each date must be included; for convenience use a blank calendar and write the item in each day's box. His shipping costs will be reimbursed if all the tokens qualify, as per sections 4 to 6 above, and the set is complete and verified by the judges. Decision of the judges will be final, in all matters. After verification, the winner will be notified by phone, and his collection will be returned, postpaid and insured, with the prize money.
- If no claims of a complete set are received, whoever claims the largest number of dates assembled by Sept. 1, 1987, will be notified by phone and asked to submit his collection, as above. The winner will be announced publically at the September, 1987 meeting of the Calif. Assn. of Token Collectors, where the collection will be on display.
9. **HELPFUL HINTS:** Try using a yearly calendar to keep track of the dates you already have and those you need. This can also be used as the invoice should you win. The dates on tokens and medals can be: founding dates, anniversary dates, holidays, celebrations, sport events, store sales, expiration dates on tokens, birthdates, death dates, meeting or convention dates, zodiac dates, election dates, etc.
10. **MEMBERSHIP:** Entrants do not have to be members of the California Association of Token Collectors, but are welcome to join. Dues are \$3.00 per year, and you receive the bimonthly newsletter TOKEN TOPICS which contains free ads from members. The status of this contest will be reported in the issues of TOKEN TOPICS this year. If you wish to join, send your \$3.00 check made out to Calif. Assn. of Token Collectors, to the address below. The club meets locally in the greater Los Angeles area six times per year, the third Sunday of each odd-numbered month.

The California Association of Token Collectors  
c/o Stephen Alpert  
P.O. Box 66331  
Los Angeles, CA 90066



# TOKEN TOPICS

of the

CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION of TOKEN COLLECTORS

MAY, 1987  
Issue No. 127

Stephen P. Alpert,  
Editor

MAY MEETING: Elaine Willahan will be hosting our May meeting at her home, 516 W. 99th St., Los Angeles, just west of the Century exit of the Harbor Freeway, and just off Figueroa near Century. The meeting is on Sunday afternoon, May 17, from 1:00 PM to about 4:30. Highlighting the meeting will be our club auction, all the material members bring to trade, sell, or show, and the refreshments. So plan on attending for a fun afternoon.

[This issue is going to press early, on May 1. A few days ago, Elaine called to inform me that she suffered a broken hip in a fall while walking the dog. She received an artificial hip and is currently recovering and in her usual good spirit. Elaine should be home with things back to near normal for our May 17th meeting, and she hopes to be able to prepare her pies that we all enjoy so much.]

MARCH MEETING REPORT: Fourteen members attended our March meeting at Elaine's: Steve Alpert, John Barnes, Bob & Harriet Carter, Boyd Cashman, Jim Garner, Robert Kubach, Fred McGinnis, Wally Shidler, Chuck Short, Ken Smith, Jack von Bloeker, and Elaine Willahan. Dick Bestard too (I accidentally left him off above list). The club auction netted our treasury \$41.95, thanks to generous donations from Larry Edell, and other donations from Elaine Willahan, Dick Bestard, and Bob Carter. The 43 lots in the auction included token, coin, & exnumia journals, all sorts of tokens and medals, local historical booklets and papers, railroad cap badges, etc. Elaine served her popular refreshments after the auction. And active trading and discussions among those present occupied the rest of the afternoon.

CONTEST UPDATE: Not much activity so far in our scavenger hunt date set contest that is open to all US and Canadian collectors. Only 3 people have officially registered so far, one of whom may be near having 200 different dates. It's not too late to start competing for the \$366 prize.

ODDS & ENDS OF INTEREST Our member Don Bestle recently celebrated his 10th year as a dealer in gaming tokens and chips. His business, Deb's, can be contacted at P.O. Box 6445, Burbank, CA 91505. <<<<o>>>> We welcome a new CATC member (#214): Richard McCutchan, 1178 N. Del Sol Lane, Diamond Bar, CA 91765. <<<<o>>>> Disneyland in Anaheim, CA will soon release "Disney Dollars" (\$1 & \$5 bills) as the official legal tender there (US currency also accepted). <<<<o>>>> Six Flags Magic Mountain amusement park in Valencia, CA is about to be sold to the investment firm of Wesray Capital (who is buying all 9 Six Flags parks for \$350 million from Bally of Chicago). Bally sure has come a long way from its humble beginnings as a small manufacturer of pinball and amusement machines in the 1930s to becoming one of the nation's largest owners of gambling casino hotels, and manufacturer of modern slot machines. All along the way they issued tokens and exnumia. <<<<o>>>> The California Exnumist Society's annual token and collectibles show will be held on Sunday, June 21, 9:30-4:30, at Griswold's Inn, 1500 So. Raymond Ave., in Fullerton. There will be about 20 dealers in the bourse. If you're within travelling distance, this show shouldn't be missed.

Send all ads, news, or other material regarding TOKEN TOPICS to Steve Alpert, P.O. Box 56331, Los Angeles, CA 90066



## A D S:

"Have to trade for similar badge (Police) 6 star white metal (clasp missing on back) R.L. Comans/Deputy/(seal of the State of Miss.)/Newton Co./Miss. Also still wanting to trade for Car washes, especially Sof Spra lots of good traders available. Anyone interested in buying my Parking Token collection? John Nicolosi, 2565 Portola Dr., Space 43, Santa Cruz, CA 95062

You needed some of the 19,991 tokens and medals Williges sold in 1986. Free! At least next 3 exonomic lists. Williges, Box 445, Wheatland, CA 95692

Special Sale - 5½ pounds of mixed old amusement tokens (from slot & pinball machines; most are nickel plated; with initials, phrases, etc.) only \$20.00 postpaid! Stephen Alpert, Box 66331, Los Angeles, CA 90066

FREE ADMISSION		
BUY-SELL-TRADE	<b>5th ANNUAL ATCO</b>	TOKENS-MEDALS-MORE
National Token & Medal Show		
		
<b>More Info:</b> George Hosok 7411 Idledale Ln Omaha, NE 68112 (402) 455-1905	<b>September 5 &amp; 6, 1987 OMAHA, NEBRASKA</b> SAT. 10-7    SUN. 9-5	<b>Show Address:</b> RAMADA INN AIRPORT Abbott Drive & Locust Omaha, NE 68110 (\$43 / 1-4 per room) (800) 228-9075



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JULY, 1987  
Issue No. 128

Stephen P. Alpert,  
Editor

**30TH ANNIVERSARY JULY MEETING:** Our meeting this month marks the 30th anniversary of our association, which first met back in July of 1957. At least one member at that initial meeting 30 years ago should be in attendance this month. No formal festivities are planned for the meeting. We are celebrating our 30th year by sponsoring the exnumia date set scavenger hunt (see contest update below). If you'll be attending our July meeting and have a camera, bring it along so we can get some group pictures and try to publish one in the next issue of Token Topics.

(The history of the CATC and highlights from the first 100 issues of Token Topics are in my 1983 book "The Best of Token Topics" [soft cover, 90 pages] now available at the reduced 30th anniv. price of only \$4.50 postpaid. Order from Steve Alpert, Box 66331, Los Angeles, CA 90066.)

Our 30th Anniversary meeting will be held on the afternoon of **July 19**, from about 1 to 4:30 PM, at the home of Elaine Willahan, 516 W.99th St., Los Angeles, easy to find, near Figueroa one short block north of Century, close to the Century exit of the Harbor Freeway. Elaine is currently living at her son's home while recovering from hip and leg injuries suffered from falls back in May. She will be opening her home for our July 19 meeting, and looks forward to seeing most of our local regular attendees. However, due to the circumstances, she will be unable to provide her popular refreshments. Thus I'm putting out a call for volunteers from among those planning to attend, to bring along a contribution for the meeting's refreshments (something home baked or store bought). I don't expect everyone to bring something; if just one-third of us do there should be plenty, maybe enough for a big 30th Anniv. party. [I will be bringing paper plates, plastic utensils, cups, napkins, punch, and a cheese coffee cake.]

Our July meeting auction will feature many items from Larry Edell - various paper items relating to transportation, plus miscellaneous tokens in quantity lots. Don't miss it! Lots of interesting stuff. If you have material to sell in the auction, bring it along.

**MAY MEETING REPORT:** Our May meeting was held at the home of Elaine Willahan, who unfortunately at the time was in the hospital, so the meeting was hosted by her house-guests Jack and Ona Von Bloeker. Also present were Steve Alpert, Dick Bestard, Bob & Harriet Carter, Boyd Cashman, Larry Elman, Jim Garner, Fred & Judy McGinnis, Frank Roselinsky, Wally Shidler, and Ken Smith, for a total of 14. The May auction was a small one with just 8 lots: railroad cap badges & tickets, back issues of TAMS journals & other exnumia books & periodicals, some transit tokens, etc. Ken Smith called the auction, which brought the club \$5.00 thanks to donations from Willahan, Carter, Bestard, McGinnis, and Roselinsky. Refreshments were provided by Ona & Harriet.

The May meeting was a rather short one which began to break up about 3:30 or so, for a couple of reasons. First, there wasn't all that much material or fresh material brought to the meeting - so it didn't take long for everyone to check out all the material present and wrap up all the buy-sell-trade transactions. Years back when 20 or so people were at each meeting and most brought binders or boxes full of exnumia, there was so much to look through that meetings lasted 4 or 5 hours. I hope we can recapture that activity.

Secondly, there wasn't much material donated or consigned to the auction, or much news or business to discuss at the meeting. We invite short presentations, talks, or show-and-tells about your collecting interests by members at the meetings, as we used to have years ago.



## CONTEST UPDATE:

## CURRENT BUSINESS DIRECTORIES

## DIRECTORIES

Second

There'

You can

Member ads:

## AM SWAPPING

CASH PAID f

HOB0 NICKEL

[illegible]

Note: Ken

FREE ADMISSION

BUY-SELL-TRADE

5th ANNUAL  
**ATCO**

TOKENS-MEDALS-MORE

National Token & Medal Show



**More Info:**  
George Hosak  
7411 Idledale Ln  
Omaha, NE 68112  
(402) 455-1905

**September 5 & 6, 1987**  
**OMAHA, NEBRASKA**  
**SAT. 10-7    SUN. 9-5**

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Abbott Drive & Locust  
Omaha, NE 68119  
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of the

## CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION of TOKEN COLLECTORS

SEPTEMBER, 1987  
Issue No. 129

Stephen P. Alpert  
Editor

SEPTEMBER MEETING: Elaine Willahan will be hosting our September meeting on Sunday, Sept.20th, from about 1 to 4:30 PM at her home at 516 W.99th St. in Los Angeles, near Figueroa one short block north of Century, close to the Century Exit of the Harbor Freeway.

Elaine is now back at home, but will have to undergo another hip operation later this year, so she can get around as well as before. Jack and Ona van Bloeker will be visiting from Arizona and will co-host the meeting with Elaine. Ona will be preparing refreshments and making our favorite cake using Elaine's recipe. A treat for all who will be attending. To help make the September meeting more enjoyable, bring along as much ex-numia as you can round up for trading, selling, or for the auction. The winning date collection from our contest will be on display at the meeting. I hope all our local members attend.

JULY MEETING REPORT: Last meeting, 12 members met at Elaine's home: Irv Alpert, John Barnes, Dick Bestard, Jack von Bloeker, Bob & Harriet Carter, Boyd Cashman, Fred McGinnis, Bob Ritterband, Wally Shidler, Ken Smith and Elaine Willahan, plus guests Ona von Bloeker and Judy McGinnis. This was our 30th Anniversary meeting; Ken Smith, who attended this meeting, was also present at our club's first meeting back in 1957. Our club auction in July had 24 lots - assorted tokens, medals, books, token bulk lots, and other collectibles. One lot was donated by Bob Ritterband. The auction brought in \$57.40, with \$7.40 going to our treasury.

Before the auction, John Barnes gave a presentation on Tony Hyman's book on where to sell your collectibles (see book review in Token Topics about a year ago). Also, Bob Ritterband reported that his home (where we hold our January meetings) was used to film part of an upcoming episode of the TV series "Hunter." It may be aired early in the new TV season beginning this month. So check for an episode about a kidnapped Oriental woman, and look for Bob on the show (somewhere in the background in the scenes shot in and around his house).

SCAVENGER HUNT CONTEST: The winner of our  
30th Anniversary  
Scavenger Hunt date-set contest is Robert Leonard

of Illinois, who reported assembling 317 different dates (out of the possible 366). His collection is being mailed in for verification by the judges. It will be displayed at our September meeting. More details on the winning collection will be given in the next issue of *TOKEN TOPICS*.

FREE ADS FROM MEMBERS: (More members should be taking advantage of this service. Send your ads to Steve Alpert, address below.)

For sale.."Julies Massage Studio" Bear Springs,NV.(Fantasy)  
good for \$1.00 next Massage. Spinner-Alum.Good for one bottle  
Double-Cola at Your Dealer Plus Deposit. Above \$1.00 each  
plus SAE. Rolled Coin San Francisco(Bay Bridge)(Alcatraz)  
Fishermens wharf.. 35¢ plus SAE. Still trading Car wash  
tokens. John Nicolosi, 2565 Portola Dr. Space 43, Santa Cruz,  
CA 95062

Only Bicentennial bawdy house medal. Fran's Star Ranch.  
Beatty, Nevada. Dollar size. Antiqued bronze. Only \$7.86  
prepaid. Free! Fran's match folder and match folder. Bill  
Williges, Box 445, Wheatland, CA 95692

1984 Los Angeles Olympics sealed cased set of 24 RTD bus tokens, only \$13.00 postpaid (or \$10 in person at Long Beach coin show Sept.24-27, see me at Table 12). Steve Alpert, Box 66331, Los Angeles, CA 90066

[illegible]

Free gift for those people attending our September meeting:  
the Sept. 1987 issue of the American Collector's Journal  
newspaper (on antiques, collectibles, nostalgia, etc.), a  
\$1.00 value.

CATC members are requested to send in news items or short articles for publication in TOKEN TOPICS. This issue is a short one; thus I typed it in small print in two columns to get it all on one page, and thus save us 50% on its printing. I've been president of CATC so long and have written so many issues of Token Topics that I'm currently all out of articles to write. Plus there's been very little or no local Calif. token news to write about. We need another local CATC member to volunteer to be President and Editor for 1988. Think it over; it's not much work at all.



# TOKEN TOPICS

of the

CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION of TOKEN COLLECTORS

NOVEMBER, 1987  
Issue No. 130

Stephen P. Alpert  
Editor

\* \* \* \* For November Meeting notice, see page 4 \* \* \* \*

SEPTEMBER MEETING REPORT: 14 people attended our Sept. meeting at the home of Elaine Willahan: members Steve Alpert, Dick Bestard, John Barnes, Bob & Harriet Carter, Boyd Cashman, Robert Kubach, Fred McGinnis, Wally Shidler, Ken Smith, Jack von Bloeker, Elaine Willahan, and guests Judy McGinnis and Ona von Bloeker. The winning collection of our scavenger hunt contest was on display (see writeup below). There wasn't much work for auctioneer John Barnes, with just 4 lots in our September auction - an assortment of tokens, medals, and back issue TAMS Journals (with donations from Carter & Bestard). The auction took in a record low of \$5.45, with \$2.30 going to our treasury.

DATE-SET SCAVENGER HUNT CONTEST RESULTS: Robert D. Leonard Jr. of Illinois was the winner of our 30th Anniversary contest, with a collection of 317 different dates. The collection was on display at the Sept. CATC meeting. The most valuable item in the collection was an old encased postage stamp (with an Aug. 12 patent date). I had planned on listing here some statistics (such as longest run of consecutive dates, longest run of missing dates, etc) and information on the type of exonomia and unusual pieces used. However, I misplaced that information, which was part of a press release on the contest results I sent to Coin World newspaper back in September (but it hasn't been published yet).

The winner received 75¢ for each of the 317 different dates he assembled, which came to \$237.75.

OTHER NEWS: Bob Ritterband reported the recent death of F. Gordon Smith, one of our charter members, who passed away at age 93. Gordon was a regular attendee of our meetings until about 10 years ago.

How many of you watched the episode of the TV show "Hunter" a few weeks ago, that was partly filmed at Bob Ritterband's house? The house was prominently featured in the first 10 minutes of the show - nearly a complete tour of both the inside and outside, as guest star Dirk Blocker (son of the late Don "Hoss Cartwright" Blocker) searched the house for his missing mail-order bride. If you watched carefully, you saw a few seconds of Bob and Molly walking along across the street in the background. Our January 1988 meeting will be hosted by the Ritterbands, in the very same house as seen on TV. Plan to attend.

DUES TIME: It's time to pay your membership dues for 1988 - still only \$3.00 for a year's membership in the California Association of Token Collectors and 6 issues of Token Topics. For the time being, and until further announcement, please send your dues to CATC c/o Steve Alpert, Box 66331, Los Angeles, CA 90066, rather than to Elaine, who will be undergoing another hip operation and recovery period in the near future. When you send in your dues, why not include a free ad for the January issue of Token Topics, and maybe a short article or news items for publication too.

Free ads received from members:

TRADE: Kappen #109 (Los Angeles) for Indiana I can use in my collection. Jack R. Smith, P.O.Box 26423, Lawrence, IN 46226

(ads continued on page 4)



THE USHERS  
TOKENS OF  
VENICE, CAL.

Most token collectors, especially those in southern California, are familiar with the Ushers zodiac tokens of Venice, Calif. They are included in the Magicians token catalogue by Kuethe published by TAMS. The Usher tokens were issued in sets of 12 (one for each sign of the zodiac), and about 10 or more die variety sets are known, giving rise to a large number of different tokens counting major and minor die varieties. The tokens are 26 mm, gilt brass, and were issued circa 1936 or later based on the 1936 copyright date on the token.

Robert Olson of Connecticut, a collector of magic exnumia, is collecting the Ushers tokens. He sent me a biography of the Ushers magic team (from the 1985 book "Magic, A Pictorial History of Conjurors in the Theatre" by David Price). Harry Usher was born in 1887 in New York City and began performing magic at age 12. He married his wife, Frances, in 1918, and they performed as The Ushers. They went on a five-and-ten-cent store circuit, where they performed magic at the stores to sell horoscopes and private astrological readings. In California they left the dime store circuit to open the "Temple of Astrology" on the Venice Pier, in the mid 1920s.

In 1927 The Ushers developed a vaudeville magic act (featuring telepathy and mind reading) which was very successful for 8 or 9 years. Then they returned to their horoscope business in Venice (this agrees nicely with the 1936 date on the tokens).

The Ushers reportedly had huge quantities of horoscopes printed. If you should have one or know of any other Ushers paper items, please write to me (Steve Alpert, Box 66331, Los Angeles, CA 90066) as Robert Olson is anxious to obtain any such items for his collection.

Maybe the Ushers distributed or sold the tokens along with their horoscopes. They apparently reordered sets of tokens numerous times, based on all the die varieties that exist. The Ushers token illustrated here (the only one I have on hand) is of the type with The Ushers name in tiny letters below the Saturn planet in the center. Another type has The Ushers in larger letters overlapping Saturn.

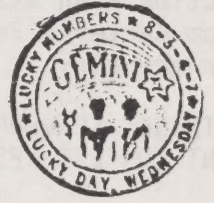
[Fred McGinnis, CATC's Vice President and our expert and historian on Venice, Calif., recalled the Ushers as being a novelty company. Perhaps they also sold novelty and magic items on the pier or by mail. Anyone with additional information on The Ushers please send it in for a possible followup article.]

NEW MEMBERS: We have two new members who recently joined our club:

Nicholas Penachio, 218 McClain St., Mt. Kisco, NY 10549

Robert Hart, J18399 S. Hart Lane, Manteca, CA 95336

Welcome to the CATC. You're both paid up through 1988.



Advertising piece of Harry and Frances Usher.



HOBO NICKELS -  
HOW TO DETERMINE  
IF ITS OLD OR  
MODERN-MADE  
by Steve Alpert

Hobo nickels are buffalo nickels with the Indian head on the obverse engraved or altered to the likeness of a hobo or other figure. They were created by hobos and other people from 1913 through the 1930s, with some of the oldtimers still making them into recent decades. Because of their popularity with collectors, a new generation of modern-made hobo nickels began appearing in the 1960s or 1970s and they are still being made today. The modern ones, which take from 5 minutes to an hour of work to produce, each, are distinctly different in appearance from the nicely made old ones, which probably took 3 to 10 hours each to create.

Most collectors haven't examined enough old and modern hobo nickels to be able to tell them apart easily. I'm attempting below to give ways to distinguish old and modern hobo nickels. I don't have any pictures available, which would make the task easier. But I think the information below is sufficient to help you determine if your hobo nickel is modern-made or old. Each of the statements below is a generality, for which there may be exceptions.

- § HOW MADE: Nice old hobo nickels have finely engraved details, and show artistic talent. Most modern hobo nickels are made with electric engraving tools (producing very fine to coarse lines) or heavy punches, and lack fine detail. The engraving tool leaves rough, sharp, fresh shiny grooves, which are often masked by being colored with a felt-tipped marker pen.
- § THE DESIGNS: Old hobo nickels are about 80% the type of a hobo with derby and beard. Other old types include soldiers & rabbis. Modern designs are much more diverse, such as hippies, jockeys, clowns, hobos with floppy hats, firemen, sailors, racers and bikers, figures with squarish or angular hats, and hatless figures (Indians, men). Only a small proportion of modern made ones have the standard old hat and beard design.
- § CONDITION OF COIN: Most old hobo nickels were made on high-grade buffalo nickels, so the reverse grades XF or better. Most modern hobo nickels are made on either dateless worn buffalo nickels, or circulated nickels dated in the late 1920s and 1930s, so the reverse grades VF or lower.
- § FINISH OF COIN: Most makers of modern hobo nickels clean or polish the coins after they are completed, giving them the appearance of stainless steel. There is no wear visible on the engraved and/or punched design (as there usually is on old hobo nickels).
- § SIGNATURES: Some modern makers of hobo nickels sign their work, so this an easy way to tell they are modern. Any hobo nickels with the following signatures are modern: "J.ALLEN" (counterstamped on the buffalo), "J.Dorusa" (or J.D. or J.H.D.), and "Bo".
- § OTHER FEATURES: If the original hair design or pattern on the Indian's head is still clearly visible on the hat, it's most likely a modern hobo nickel. The area behind the head (where the protruding feathers have to be removed) is very rough on some modern made pieces (it's usually smoothed on old hobo nickels).

Tips on determining quality of old hobo nickels: I've broken down the hobo nickel into the following components, and given each a point value relative to its importance (maximum points in parenthesis). HAT (including brim & band; 5 points); HAIR (including sideburns, beard & mustache; 5 points); EAR (3 points); EYE (including brow, lashes, crows feet; 2 points); PROFILE (including nose, nostril & mouth; 3 points); NECK-COLLAR-SHOULDER area (3 points); FIELD (removal of Liberty, feathers, smoothness; 2 points); ACCESSORIES (wording, date, signature, glasses, pipe, cigarette, etc; 3 points). That's 26 possible points on my scale. Low point total pieces (= low quality) would have no ear, eye & profile unchanged, crude hat, collar, etc. Top quality pieces would have a point total of 18 or more. I put the value of an old hobo nickel at \$1½ per point.



ads continued:

BEST OFFERS: Mardi Gras tokens, 80 plus; Shell Mr. President & States coins; several hundred OPA red 7 blue points; Antique Car series-45+. McDonalds Wooden Nickel collection for sale best offer, Sambos Wood Coll. best offer. Trading Car Wash tokens-send list of haves&wants; need Sofspira, have good traders. Have several thousand Letterheads-will let go real cheap or trade for something I can use. John Nicolosi, 2565 Portola Dr., Space 43, Santa Cruz, CA 95062

NEVADA and Atlantic City gaming and casino tokens and chips. 50 page list and encased horseshoe penny \$2 postpaid. DEB's, Box 6445, Burbank, CA 91505

UNLISTED Depression scrip coupon book. W.A. Graham Co., Pryor, Oklahoma. \$5.00 uncirculated book. Only \$3.86 prepaid. 2 for \$6.86. Bill Williges, Box 1245, Wheatland, CA 95692

CONSIGNMENTS needed for my 29th Mail Bid Sale (early 1988). Also buying all tokens, medals, misc. exnumia accumulations and collections. Hobo nickels wanted - top price paid for nice old ones. Paying \$2 each for Ushers tokens of Venice, CA, Fine or better condition. All Ford auto tokens & medals wanted, especially V8 and 3-bust pieces (paying \$4 each, VF or better). Also buying old beer, brewery and billiard tokens - write. Steve Alpert, Box 66331, Los Angeles, CA 90066

NOVEMBER MEETING: John Barnes will be hosting our November meeting at his home in Sherman Oaks. John has just returned from a trip to England, and he should have some interesting tales of his token-searching exploits over there. The meeting is on Sunday, Nov. 15, from about 1 to 4 PM, at 4021 Pacheco Drive in Sherman Oaks. From the northbound San Diego Freeway, take the Ventura Blvd. offramp, turn right onto Sepulveda, go about 3 blocks and turn left onto Valley Vista. Take the winding Valley Vista about 3/4 mile and turn right onto Stone Canyon. Go one block and turn right on Pacheco and go a block to 4021. From the westbound Ventura Fwy, exit at Van Nuys, turn left to Ventura Bl., turn right on Ventura to Kester Ave., turn left onto Kester, then 1/2 mile to Valley Vista, turn right then left at Store Canyon & right at Pacheco as above. Check a map if confused. If you still need help finding John's home, phone him at (818) 783-6745.

A free copy of the Nov. issue of American Collectors Journal newspaper will be available for all who attend. Scheduled to be discussed at the meeting is an idea by Ken Smith to revitalize our club and the meetings. It involves moving our meetings to Saturdays in a Savings & Loan community meeting room, and getting significant free publicity for the general public to attend. We need to do something - the scavenger hunt contest didn't work - and Ken's plan may be just what we need.